



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES COMMISSIONER NICOLE "NIKKI" FRIED

What You Should Know About the Urban Turf Fertilizer Rule

As of January 8, 2015, The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services revised the Urban Turf Fertilizer Rule 5E- 1.003 F.A.C. from its original version adopted in 2007. The changes were in response to the culmination of 8 years of turf research conducted by the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences turf scientists funded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The purpose of the rule is to limit the nitrogen and phosphorus application from fertilizer on urban turf and lawns in an attempt to protect Florida's natural water resources. Listed below are points of interest pertaining to Florida's Urban Turf Rule.

- The Urban Turf Rule applies only to specialty fertilizer labeled for lawns or urban turf (packaged in containers or bags such that the net weight is 49 pounds or less and distributed for home and garden use).
- Rate of application shall be expressed per 1000 square feet and coverage area of the container or bag shall be displayed prominently on the front.
- Nitrogen shall not be applied at an application rate greater than 0.7 lbs of readily available nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. based on the soluble fraction of formulated fertilizer.
- Not more than 2 lbs. of total nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. per application may be applied during the spring or summer; not more than 1 lb total nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. per application may be applied during the fall or winter.
 - No application of nitrogen in the winter months in north Florida.
- Nitrogen applications cannot exceed the annual nitrogen recommendations in the Annual Fertilization Guidelines for Established Turfgrass Lawns listed on the Three Regions of Florida table.
- If a total controlled release form of nitrogen is applied, not more than 35 percent of the nitrogen can be released within the first 7 days after application.

- Products labeled for use on urban turf shall be either no phosphate or low phosphate. “No phosphate fertilizer” means fertilizer products with phosphate levels below 0.5%. “Low phosphate fertilizer” means fertilizer products with phosphate levels equal to or above 0.5%.
- Available Phosphate: A maximum rate of 0.25 lb per 1000 sq. ft per application, not to exceed 0.5 lb per 1000 sq. ft. annually.
- Starter fertilizer will have directions for use that do not exceed 1.0 lb of P₂O₅/1000 sq. ft. and follow up application instructions will meet the “no phosphate” definition. The term “starter fertilizer” shall be used as part of the brand name.
- The following language shall appear conspicuously on bags of fertilizer sold at retail: “Apply only to actively growing turf. Do not apply near water, storm drains or drainage ditches. Do not apply if heavy rain is expected. Apply this product only to your lawn, and sweep any product that lands in the driveway, sidewalk, or street, back onto your lawn. Check with your local Cooperative Extension Agent to obtain specific information on local turf best management practices. Check with your county or city government to determine if there are local regulations for fertilizer use.”

For questions regarding the Urban Turf Rule contact:

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